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School Committee Minutes 01-23-2001

Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 23, 2001
Minutes

Present: **Wm. A. Carey, Jr., Chair** **Martin J. Thrope**
 Joani LaMachia, Vice-Chair **Denis J. Sullivan**
 Michael T. Healy, Secretary **Barbara C. Goodman**
 David W. McKenna

Kay Donovan, Joanne Gurry, Marilyn Bisbicos

Call To Order: 7:40 PM

Public Participation

None

Secretary's Report

Mr. Healy reviewed correspondence

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. LaMachia

Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of December 12, 2000. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. LaMachia

Voted to approve the executive session minutes of December 12, 2000. Unanimous

Ottoson Survey

Ms. Goodman reported that the Community Relations subcommittee wanted to survey the Ottoson Middle School after its 1st three-year cycle.

The emphasis would be on what makes a successful middle school. The Ottoson School Council presented the results of the needs assessment survey conducted in May 1999. The survey included parents, teachers, and students. Erin Phelps reported out on the results (attached) that focused on:

Common themes among Students, Staff, and Parents/guardians

.. Best things about the Ottoson

- o Teachers/faculty, administration, and support staff; curriculum, including out-of-cluster classes; students.

.. Things that most need improvement

- o Curriculum, discipline, opportunities for professional development, substitute teachers, communication in general, cleanliness of buildings, air conditioning and screens for the windows.

The school improvement council is in the process of working on addressing areas in need of improvement.

Ottoson Olympiad

Judie Phelps, teacher at Ottoson along with 7th grade students Caitlin Collins and John Costa reported that the Olympiads raised \$18,732.00; the highest amount in any one-year. The Olympiad started by Ottoson teacher Tony Lalicata has raised over \$150,000.00 over the years and has benefited charities such as: The Jimmy Fund, Rosie's Place, Cystic Fibrosis, Gilpatrick-Spinal Cord Foundation and the Kidney Association.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. McKenna

Voted unanimously to send a letter of congratulations to the Ottoson students and administration.

Announcement of Executive Session Votes

Mr. Sullivan announced that the committee voted to increase the salary of the Assistant Superintendent Joanne Gurry to \$92,000.00 and to establish a tax-sheltered annuity in the amount of \$1000.00 retroactive to September 1, 2000. The Committee also voted to increase the salary of the Director of Special Education Marilyn Bisbicos to \$82,000.00 retroactive to September 1, 2000.00. Mr. Thrope pointed out that it is not common practice for the Committee to take late night votes after executive session and only did so to expedite paper work.

Request For Waiver/Metco Counselor

Mrs. Donovan asked the Committee to waive the certification requirement for Ron Colossi, counselor for Metco while he is finishing his coursework.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation for a waiver of certification requirement for Ron Colossi. Unanimous

Special Education Reimbursement Formula

Supt. Donovan reported that the increases that the town had hoped to receive due to changes in the special education law would not be as great as previously expected. Director of Special Education Bonnie Bisbicos provided the committee with spreadsheets detailing the current formula and the proposed formula in the areas of: residential placements, private day placements and in-district collaborative placements. Dr. Bisbicos does not expect to see an increase for a few years and with the proposed formula Arlington would receive a net gain of \$309,476.78 in 2002. The Committee will address the issue with our state legislators when they meet at the February 13th school committee meeting.

Recess

Position Paper Summary

Asst. Supt. Gurry presented the MCAS position paper summary and the list of recipients for review. The Committee suggested adding the school website and phone numbers for the administration and making that version available to parents. A letter from the school committee chairman asking for comments or suggestions will accompany the original MCAS statement sent to officials from the State, the DOE, MASS and MASC.

In other MCAS matters Dr. Gurry informed the Committee that sign ups for the MCAS prep program are in progress and classes will begin late February. Mr. Sullivan took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of AHS 10th graders participating in this year's MCAS test.

Redistricting

Supt. Donovan stated that she would like to meet with parents and PTO's of each school regarding redistricting. With the map and proposed district lines she will ask for feedback from the parents. Kay will send a calendar with meeting dates to School Committee Members.

Report of PTBC/School Building Assistance Policy

Mr. Thrope reported that the Peirce School is on target. The PTBC continues to deal with cost and structural issues at the Hardy School. Mrs. Donovan stated that the Department of Education released the second in a series of advisories providing additional information on the School Building Assistance Program's new policies and procedures. Effective January 10, 2001 if you anticipate that the schools are going to cost more than originally planned you must apply for a waiver from the State even before you go out to construction and not after the bid comes in.

Kay would like the committee to take a vote asking for the waiver; we anticipate that the Peirce will come in higher after looking at preliminary figures. At a future meeting Supt. Donovan will give an estimate of what Arlington's reimbursement rate will look like.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Healy it was

Voted to endorse the Superintendent to ask the PTBC to request a waiver from the State prior to the construction of the Peirce School. Unanimous.

School Ratings Report

Mrs. Donovan read a memo from the Commissioner on the recent school ratings report. In it Commissioner Driscoll stated that next fall he would review and refine the rating policy along with the terms used to label each improvement category.

Per Pupil Expenditure

Supt. Donovan reported that Arlington spends \$6693.00 per pupil which places Arlington 97th in the State. That is broken down into a cost of \$5995.00 per pupil for regular education (slightly above average) and \$9801.00 per pupil for special education (slightly below average).

New Business

Mr. Thrope requested that the Committee examine the warrant article relative to compensation for school committee members.

In response to Ms. Goodman's question on what process would be used in hiring the new principal at AHS, Mrs. Donovan stated that a focus group would be formed consisting of staff and parents.

Mr. Healy requested the Supt. Donovan hold two public hearings in March on redistricting and budget.

Mr. McKenna informed the Committee that a vote to make the traffic supervisor post permanent at Gray Street and Fountain Avenue would be required at the next meeting. In addition, Mr. McKenna stated that he would be recommending a temporary traffic supervisor post at Massachusetts Avenue and Appleton Street.

Ms. LaMachia noted that the International Institute of Boston sponsored a training program on the Sudanese students last week for interested staff and community members.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was

Voted to enter executive session to discuss language in the warrant articles. RC: Unanimous

Executive Session 10:15 – 10:35 PM

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was
Voted to adjourn at 10:35 PM. RC: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted

Karen Tassone